

THE RIBBON METROPOLIS.

MR. CARPENTER WRITES OF ST. ETIENNE, THE RIBBON WEAVING CENTER OF EUROPE.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

St. Etienne, France. Have you ever heard of St. Etienne? It is the ribbon town of the world. It makes most of the trimmings for the hats and bonnets of Christendom, and there is hardly a well-dressed woman who has not some of its goods on her person. There are two hundred factories here which do nothing else but weave ribbons, and there are thousands of looms upon which these French men and women are weaving the brilliant strips of silk in their homes. Four-fifths of all the ribbon and silk braids made in France, and about half of all made in Europe come from here. We patronize St. Etienne to the extent of almost \$2,000,000 every year, and its local output of ribbon annually sells for almost \$20,000,000.

THE BIRMINGHAM OF FRANCE. This is the Birmingham of France. It is situated about three hours by rail south of Lyons, on what might be called the roof of the country. The land is mountainous and filled with beds of manufacturing coal. I rode through tunnel after tunnel in coming here from the silken metropolis, and I am now in a country which is not unlike the Black Country of England. There are smokestacks everywhere. The air is as dark as that of Pittsburgh, and the population is largely made up of the working classes.

St. Etienne has 150,000 people, mostly the employees of the ribbon, gun and cutlery works. Long lines of coal carts are to be seen moving this way and that along the streets. Sooty-faced miners, in caps and blouses, go through them and from their work, and with them are pale-faced weavers and jaunty factory girls who work only on ribbons. At night the public squares are filled with these working people, men and women and boys and girls move about arm-in-arm, the band plays, and the people sit under the trees and chat.

STREET SCENES. The street scenes here are different from those of any Paris. During the day all is business. Men go along with great baskets on their backs, and women are to be seen pushing carts of vegetables through the streets, selling their wares from door to door. Much of the retail business is done by peddling. Girls travel about with packs on their backs and sell from house to house as the itinerant Jew sometimes does in America. Men push carts and some pull, being harnessed up like beasts.

One of the queerest sights is the ribbon porter, or the girl who carries boxes of ribbons piled one on top of the other until they reach high above her head. She carries the boxes in her arms and can hardly see her way for the bundle in front of her. She is checked and harassed, and is almost always good looking. Then there are school boys and school girls going along with bags of books on their backs. The small children have their legs bare from the calves to the knees, and the boys wear black gowns hiding their trousers. There are old women in caps, and a multitude of young women without them.

THE RIBBON GIRL. I like the looks of these ribbon girls. They are gay and giddy and decidedly French. From the style of their clothes you would not think they worked for only a few cents a day and put in ten or eleven hours according to the season. There are 30,000 of them who do nothing but weave ribbons. One of the chief factors tells me that the best of his workers come from the families which have been weaving for generations. He says that the girls must be deft rather than skillful, and that they must be coldblooded. If the maiden perspires her hands are liable to stain the delicate ribbons, and warm girls are not wanted.

FRENCH HOUSE INDUSTRY. This whole country is a beehive of home industry. Outside the great ribbon factories there are thousands of looms upon which the people weave ribbons in their homes. Many are connected with the electric power plants of the city, a charge of 7 cents per loom per day being made for the current. There are thousands of girls about St.

Etienne who work in lace, and other thousands on the farms who make lace when they cannot work in the fields. There are also many men who manufacture cutlery in their homes, and St. Etienne turns out something like 10,000 knives every week. It makes quantities of guns in the same way, and in addition there is here the government arms factory, which sometimes employs 10,000 men at one time. They are now making guns that use liquid gas in place of powder.

THE RIBBON IN FACTORIES. The tendency is now to make ribbons in factories. The house industry is gradually declining and new factories go up every year. I visited one of the largest this afternoon, going through room after room in which different kinds of ribbons are made. Both steam and electricity are used, and the factory is not unlike the silk mills I described in my letter from Lyons. In one room scores of girls were reeling silk for the warp, and in others men and women were weaving. The looms were small, though some made many ribbons at one time. I was surprised at the work it takes to make a ribbon. The raw silk is produced in France and elsewhere. The cocoons are spun and the threads reeled before the real work begins. Then the pattern must be designed and the loom arranged for it, so that an army toils to make the ribbons which encircle the necks of our maidens.

Many of the ribbons are of velvet. Some are of satin, and some have flowers and birds raised in satin on a soft silken ground. St. Etienne makes gold ribbons and silver ribbons and ribbons as wonderful in their decoration as a peacock's tail. You can have your portrait thus woven in silk if you can afford to pay the bill. There are ribbons of cotton covered with silk, and ribbons which are half velvet and half cotton. On one loom I saw 30 shuttles working at once. They were making ribbons one-fourth of an inch wide covered with embroidery. The ribbons were woven over glass rods and the shuttles flew back and forth like things of life. In one pattern I was told there were 2,700 threads, and that the design alone cost \$1,000.

In other places they were printing ribbons, and in others they were weaving them of fancy gauze for trimmings. The factors tell me that America is one of the best markets, and that times are good or bad according to the American demand.

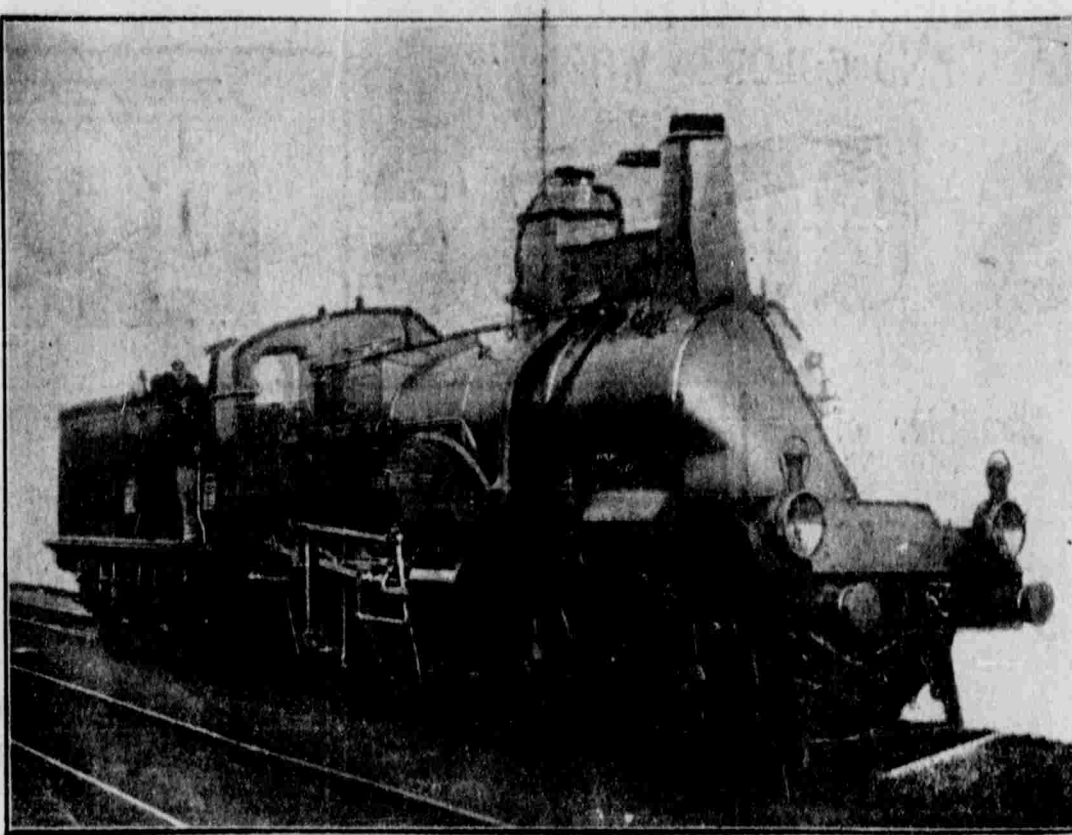
THE COAL FIELDS OF FRANCE.

This town is in the heart of the coal field of central France. Here, and among the borders of Belgium and near Calais is the most of the coal of the country is mined. About 3,500,000 tons are produced in St. Etienne every year, which is a little over one-tenth of the product of all France. The total production in 1900 amounted to 32,000,000 tons and the consumption to 44,000,000 tons, making a deficit of 12,000,000 tons, which France bought of England, Belgium and Germany. Only a very little coal has so far been purchased of the United States, but it is believed that American coal can be shipped here at a profit, and that there is a good field here for this feature of the American invasion. Our coal could be landed at Havre, Bordeaux or Marseilles and thence shipped to the chief manufacturing centers. The duty is only a little over 1 cent per 100 pounds, so that the chief feature is that of transportation. The probability is that the demand for coal here will steadily increase. The deposits will at the present rates be exhausted in 50 years and today every bit of the coal mined is used.

FUEL BRICKS OF COAL AND OIL.

The dust is made up into briquettes, either with or without the admixture of petroleum. There is one company here that makes coal bricks that are half coal and half petroleum, and another which manufactures bricks containing 97 per cent of petroleum. The latter burn without odor or smoke. They are not affected by water and can be kept a long time without deterioration. Their heating power in proportion to the coal contents is far beyond that of coal. One-third of a ton of the briquettes is equal to more than a ton of coal in heating power. Only refined petroleum is used, that from the United States being preferred. The invention is a new one, and it might probably be of value in the coal fields of Pennsylvania where the oil and the refuse coal

It Has Two Hundred Factories and Thousands of Workers on Ribbons and Laces—French House Industry—The Coal Fields of the Loire, and How They are Mined—Petroleum Bricks and Coal Dust Briquettes—Wages of Miners—Chances for American Coal and Other Goods—French Railroads and Railroad Men—Our Locomotives in France—A Look at the Stations and Something About the American Invasion.



Photographed for the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.

"THE FRENCH LOCOMOTIVES ARE BETTER FINISHED THAN OURS."

dust are so close together. The selling price of these petroleum bricks is about \$15 a ton.

AMONG THE FRENCH MINERS.

There are about 25,000 men employed in the coal mines of the basin of the Loire and Saône, and of these 15,000 work underground. There are in all about 140,000 coal miners in France, the greatest number being in the north. The coal is not very clean and a number of hands have to be used for sorting and picking. The mines are very dry and life is by no means safe. Wages are comparatively low. One of the larger companies pays its miners \$1.40 a day. Its timber men 90 cents and its common laborers from 80 cents to 90 cents.

Work begins at 6 o'clock in the morning and continues until 11, when there is a stop for lunch. The men go to work again at 12 and stop at 1:30. This gives them a day of about eight and one-half hours. All repairs are done at night. In these mines the men are working at a depth of 1,200 feet from the surface. The mines are worked in tips, generally three to each seam. The seam averages from 12 to 15 feet thick and it is so worked on account of the gases, which, it is said, are better avoided by this method of operation. Picks only are used as explosives are very dangerous. Other mines have much thicker seams. One which produces 1,000,000 tons of coal a year has a seam over 90 feet thick. The seam of this mine dips about 40 degrees; it is mined upward in horizontal strips.

The French government buys coal for its railroads by the thousands of tons. The fuel is both in the lump and in briquettes. There are piles of black bricks put up like the bricks in a brick yard at all the chief stations, and you see such piled behind the locomotives. There is no waste in using them and they are more easily handled than the coal itself.

FRENCH RAILROADS.

I like the French railroads. They are well built and the cars make fairly good time. The trains are of three classes and the second class is good enough for anyone. The rates of fare

are about the same as those of the American railroads, but the charges for baggage are higher. Only 60 pounds are allowed free, and overweights cost-ing about half a cent per pound per mile.

The French cars are long. They are divided into compartments or little rooms about six feet wide, running across the cars, with a passageway at one side. Both seats and backs are upholstered. They run across the compartments and face each other, four people being supposed to sit on each side. The seats next to the windows are the best, and the first arrivals reserve them by putting their baggage there. The conductor punches the tickets before the train starts, and they are also punched as you come out of the cars.

The tracks are not fenced. Indeed, there are few fences anywhere and their absence adds to the beauty of the landscape. In coming to Lyons I rode for miles through a patchwork carpet of many colored crops interspersed with pasture and cut by white roads bordered with tall poplars and other green trees. Along the railroad was a fringe of the most brilliant red poppies and the yellow wheat fields showed thousands of these poppies set as it were in a gold ground. I saw cattle here and there in the fields, but every animal was tied to a stake and ate a circle out of the green. At each road crossing there was a flag woman to warn the people to keep back while the train passed, and now and then we rode through sections where the road was being repaired.

WHAT RAILROAD MEN GET.

I asked some questions as to wages. They are lower than in the United States. Engineers earn about \$36 a month and in addition have a commission on the amount of coal they can save over a certain fixed quantity by which a man can raise his wages to \$50 a month. Stokers get \$25 a month, foremen in the shop \$48 a month and ordinary workmen about \$20 per month. Station agents have proportionately low wages and the scale on the whole is far under that of our country. More than one-tenth of all the men in the

service get less than \$17 a month; a little more than one-third receive from \$17 to \$22, and more than half get less than \$25 per month. The men work from seven to twelve hours per day and on the average about 25½ days per month. The women at the crossings usually get from 10 to 20 cents per day. They live close to the road and have to be on duty only at the times of the trains.

AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVES IN FRANCE.

There are now a number of American

locomotives employed on the French railroads. They are very successful and some of them on their trial trips have maintained an average speed of 70 miles an hour. The locomotives were somewhat changed after they were received here, because the French engineers did not think the weight was equally distributed over the wheels.

The French have some fine looking locomotives of their own, and it seems to me that their engines are somewhat better finished than ours. Their cars are very light and neither freight nor passenger cars will carry as much as those of the United States.

France has now 24,000 miles of railroads and a little over 10,000 locomotives. The average engine travels 25,000 miles during the year and the speed of the express trains runs from 17 to 60 miles an hour. Freight trains run from four to 17 miles an hour, and they carry much less than similar trains in the United States. As a whole it seems to me that we are far in advance of the French as to all matters relating to railroads.

ABOUT THE STATIONS.

The French railroad stations, however, are better managed than ours. The restaurants are good. I took my dinner at the Paris depot before I left for Lyons. The meal included a soup, an excellent fish, and also meat, potatoes, cheese and strawberries with a half bottle of Chablis. The charge was 70 cents. You can get a good dinner without wine at almost any station for 40 cents, and the trains stop long enough for you to eat your dinner. There are but few dining cars, and only the fast express train carries a carry-over.

Newspapers and magazines are not sold on the cars. The newsboys bring them to you at the stations, holding his pack of papers outside the car windows. In the towns the newspapers are sold by women in booths on the streets. Some of the booths have advertisements about their tops, and among these are often cards advertising American goods.

Indeed, the Americans are better advertised than the French. I see signs describing the virtues of American sewing machines and typewriters everywhere, and a common advertisement in France is that of American paint, or "menthe Americaine."

As a whole, however, St. Etienne does not buy much American goods. There are some California fruits and Philadelphia pickles sold in the stores, and there is the usual exhibition of typewriters, cameras and sewing machines. The Mutual and Equitable life insurance companies have offices here, but as to American shoes, matches and cereals, they are conspicuous by their absence.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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NEW YORK'S QUEER RIG.

A rig that appeared on Fifth avenue yesterday afternoon attracted no end of

notice, because the cart was before the horse literally. The vehicle was designed for pleasure driving and contained a man and woman. The horse was a handsome cob.

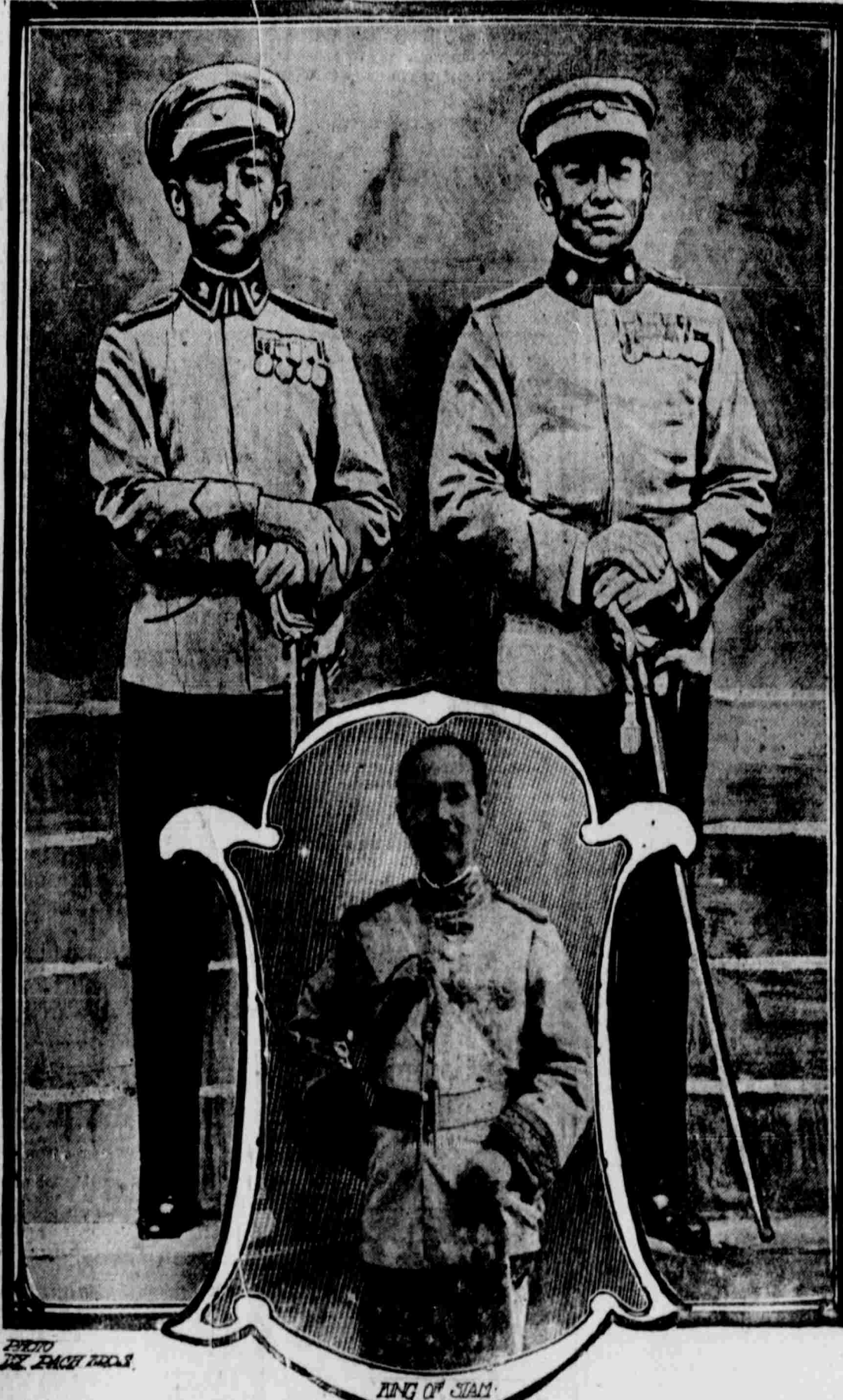
The carriage was shaped like a hansom, but the shafts between which the horse was hitched stuck out behind. Those who saw the rig for the first time made out just how the horse was guided. The carriage had in front a lever not unlike that by which an automobile is guided and was fitted with a brake. The vehicle was driven up Fifth avenue and disappeared in Central Park—New York Sun.

WOMAN FOR OFFICE.



The Prohibition candidate for the Massachusetts legislature in the first Hampshire district was a woman. She is Mrs. Fanny J. Clary, one of the few women candidates for a legislative office in the United States. A question has been raised as to whether a woman's name can go on a ballot. Mrs. Clary's friends hold that while the state laws deny suffrage to women, nothing is said therein which prevents them from holding office.

KING IS CO IN HERE.



So much pleased is the Crown Prince of Siam with everything he has heard in the United States that his enthusiastic reports to his royal father have filled the king of Siam with an ambition and expressed determination to visit this country at an early date. He will be the first reigning monarch to visit the United States since the formation of the Union. The Siam government has already appropriated a million taels for spending money for his majesty during his tour. Above are latest photographs of our present visitors, the crown prince and his brother and his majesty, our next royal visitors.



England has a new war on her hands. The subjugation of the famous Somaliland chief, known as the Mad Mullah, is likely to prove a serious proposition only to be accomplished by the outpouring of more British blood in the continent which has of late been the death of so many of Britannia's finest. The Mad Mullah has a force of 40,000 men at his back. England will seek the help of Abyssinia to defeat her new enemy.